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ABSTRACT

This case study describes an intervention to increase compliance with routine tasks in a 7-year-old boy with moderate mental retardation. Prior to intervention the boy was unable to complete a series of eight routine tasks associated with arriving at school and preparing for work. The highly structured intervention used picture prompts for each task as well as a tape recording which provided timing cues. If all tasks were completed within an 8-minute time frame, the subject received verbal social reinforcers. Baseline data indicated that it took the child an average of 29 minutes to complete the eight tasks. During the 11-day intervention phase, the boy took an average of 4 minutes to complete all tasks. During the 5 days of fading (when less adult attention was provided as reinforcement) he was able to complete the tasks in an average of 3 minutes. (DB)

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DEVELOPING COMPLIANCE

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Introduction

The subject N.A., a seven year old boy, had an academic related difficulty performing eight daily tasks in a timely manner in order to get ready for circle time. More specifically, it would take N.A. an average of twenty-nine minutes to take his folder out of his school bag, place his folder on the teacher's table, take his coat off, hang his coat up, place his lunch box on the shelf, hang his school bag on the hook, get an activity, and play with an activity in his seat.

An interventionist approach was used to reinforce appropriate behavior. A structured setting using picture prompts for each of the eight academic tasks was provided to cue N.A. to complete each activity in a step-by-step manner. Success completed within each step was encouraged by verbal and non-verbal praise. In addition, a tape was played in which N.A. heard a bell which he identified as the starting point to complete his academic tasks with picture prompts. After the starting point, eight timed intervals existed on the tape. After all eight tasks were completed within an eight minute time frame, N.A. was reinforced for his appropriate behavior by playing a game for ten minutes with the researcher.

The interventionalist packag[illegible] very well structured. Pictures and the use of the cassette tape was an attempt to provide a more structural learning environment. The social reinforcement strategies used will help N.A. to complete

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each task. N.A. loves verbal praise and to complete activities with the teacher. Therefore, the social reinforcers used in this intervention were used to motivate N.A. to become compliant.

It is important for N.A. to complete all eight tasks in a timely manner in order to join his classmates during morning story and the rest of the activities during the day. Furthermore, N.A. has to learn to cooperate with others.

This intervention's possible benefit to N.A. is to have him complete tasks in a timely manner in order to learn and join his classmates for academic and social interaction with others in school. Meanwhile, learning how to complete tasks in a timely fashion will enable N.A. to become employed on our society and to cooperate with others.

Methods

Subject

N.A. is a 7-year old boy who resides with his parents. He is currently functioning at the mental age of 2-years, 10-months. He received a score of 43 on the Wechsler/Preschool/Primary Scale of Intelligence which places him in the moderate mentally retarded category. N.A. is able to rote count to ten and has number sense up to the number four. He is unable to read at this level.

While reading N.A.'s psychological evaluation and IEP, past teachers and social workers have described N.A. as a

boy who needs adult attention. The social worker stated that N.A. is babied at home and the transition from a dependent atmosphere (home) to an independent atmosphere (school) is rough.

One prior intervention was used with N.A. in 1993, by a social worker for N.A.'s non-compliance. The intervention was applied at home and in school which was successful. However, when the intervention ceased, N.A.'s compliant behavior turned non-compliant again. N.A.'s parents stated that it was too hard to maintain the intervention which was to speak to N.A. in a loud firm voice when telling him to complete a task. Also, parents stated it was too hard to have N.A. perform tasks individually.

N.A.'s mother stated in the psychological evaluation that he is overly dependent; will not self-initiate, or engage independently in activities. In addition, N.A. can put his shirt, shoes, and pants on but prefers mother to do this for him.

N.A.'s IEP states that he needs to be spoken to in a firm consistent tone of voice repeating exact directions every time. Tasks should be broken down into small components and extra processing time should by allowed.

The goal of the intervention was to have N.A. become compliant and complete morning tasks in order to join his classmates in academic and social environments. This will enable N.A. to function and become an employed independent citizen who is able to follow directions.

Elaine, the teacher's assistant, completed a reliability check during all three phases of the intervention to verify accuracy in the collection of data.

Setting

The school in which N.A. attends is located in a suburban school district which presently educates 330 students. There is a total of four special education classes and fifteen regular education classes.

The class ecology consists of puppets, blocks, interactive bulletin boards, and decorations. The students in the room have their own lunch seats, desks, and spots during circle time. Academic learning time takes place between the time frame of 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The time frame in which the intervention was employed is from 8:40 a.m. to 9:10 a.m.

All nine students in the classroom have their own individual needs. Two students have Down syndrome. Two students are brain injured accompanied with Apraxia. Two students have Pervasive developmental disorder. One student is mildly retarded and one student is moderately retarded. One student is learning disabled. In addition, two children each mentioned above are suffering from Cerebral Palsy and Type I Malformation Arnold Chiari disease.

The chronological age range of the students are between five and eight years old. The mental age of the students are between one in a half years old and six years old.

Procedures

A curricular adaption was made by providing N.A. with visual prompts so he was able to associate what he needs to do with the appropriate picture. Social reinforcers such as positive verbal/non-verbal praise and completing puzzles or activities of his choice was the strategy used in the intervention. During each phase of baseline, intervention, and fading, a duration recording form was used and a reliability check by Elaine was conducted.

During the collection of baseline, N.A. would miss morning story because he would take so long to complete his morning tasks such as: taking his folder out of his school bag, placing his folder on the table, taking his coat off, placing his coat on the cloak hook, placing his lunch box on the shelf, hanging his school bag on the hook, getting an activity and sitting in his seat with the activity. During this time, the standard procedure used in the classroom was for N.A. to be spoken to in a loud firm voice in a consistent manner when he was not completing his task. In addition, a star and slash system was used to try to motivate N.A. to complete tasks. Evidently, a star/slash system did not seem to motivate N.A. and a new intervention was needed. There was no reason to extend the baseline phase.

After the collection of baseline, the teacher decided to make eight picture prompts for N.A. to look at so he could understand and process what he needed to perform. In addition, a tape was used to monitor the amount of time

N.A., was taking to complete each task. N.A. would hear a bell which would be his cue to start his morning tasks. For example, the bell would be heard on the tape. N.A. would hold the picture of himself taking his folder out of his school bag, complete the task, and place the picture prompt in a basket. If N.A. was able to complete this first tasks in less than one minute(before he heard the whistle on the tape), he was rewarded by positive verbal and non-verbal praise such as "Thumbs up, great job, I like the way you took your folder out of your school bag". N.A. received one minute to complete every one task using the picture prompts.

After N.A. completed all tasks using the picture prompts and received verbal social reinforcers for completing all eight tasks in eight minutes, N.A. was reinforced by playing an activity or game for a total of ten minutes with the teacher.

Before the collection of data in the intervention phase by the teacher, and reliability check by Elaine, a total of three days of modeling took place for N.A. to process his responsibility to complete his morning tasks. During the first modeling session, the teacher described what was going on in all eight picture prompts to N.A. Furthermore, the teacher had N.A. regurgitate the action that was taking place in each picture prompt. N.A. was able to understand what was going on in the pictures only after two times of explaining each action picture prompt. When N.A. understood the pictures meaning, the teacher walked N.A. through the

task analysis. In addition, the teacher introduced N.A. to the baskets which he needed to place his picture prompts in after he completed the task. Once N.A. was able to understand the picture prompts and basket procedure day two of the modeling procedure took place.

During day two of modeling, it was time for the teacher to introduce the tape to N.A. He was given a review of the picture prompts and basket procedure. Also, N.A. was told that when he heard a loud bell it was time to start to complete his tasks according to what he saw on the pictures. In addition, the teacher told N.A. that he needs to complete every one task before he hears a loud whistle. All eight tasks were performed by N.A. with the teacher's assistant. N.A. was able to make the distinction that he needed to complete the tasks before he heard the whistle. Also, at the end of all eight tasks, existed a voice which stated "Stop N.A.". If he completed all eight tasks in time, he received verbal praise in between all time intervals. After all tasks were completed, he played an activity or game with the teacher for a total of ten minutes. Originally during day two of modeling, N.A. was given two minutes to complete each task; however, during day three of modeling, the tape was reduced to every one minute a whistle was heard. N.A. seemed to be able to complete several tasks at once.

During day three of modeling, N.A. was expected to complete all steps. Basic review of all procedures was performed and N.A. was to complete tasks in time.

After day three of modeling, it was time for the intervention phase to be implemented.

After the intervention was completed, it was time to fade. In order to fade the intervention, N.A. still received the picture prompts, verbal/non-verbal social reinforcers, and activity time with the teacher; but, activity time was reduced from ten minutes gradually ending to one minute. In addition, eight one minute intervals were reduced to eight thirty second intervals. There was no reason for extending a phase during this intervention package. An A/B design was used in conducting all phases. Elaine's reliability check was 100 percent accurate each time.

Results

During a seven day collection of baseline, it took N.A. an average of twenty-nine minutes to complete all eight tasks. Following the results, an intervention was implemented.

While the eleven day intervention phase was implemented, it took N.A. an average of four minutes to complete all eight tasks. N.A. received all social and activity reinforcers every day of the intervention except on day 8. N.A. completed all tasks on day eight in eighteen minutes. N.A. did not receive the social reinforcer of playing an activity with the teacher; however, he did receive verbal praise for completing some of the tasks on

time. Because N.A. was motivated to complete the tasks in this phase to receive the social reinforcers, he had no problem producing satisfactory results when he understood that without completing one task in a one minute time interval he could not receive the activity time with the teacher.

Finally, during the five days of fading the intervention, it took N.A. an average of three minutes to complete all eight tasks. N.A. was still able to complete the eight tasks in a timely manner during fading of the intervention. Still, a motivating activity was provided for N.A. which enabled him to complete tasks with success in a timely fashion. N.A did not seem to be bothered with the fact that the teacher decreased time spent with him while playing with an activity. For example, day nineteen of fading, the teacher played with N.A. for five minutes. Then each day after day nineteen, the teacher decreased activity time one minute so that on the last day of fading the teacher only played with N.A. for a total of one minute.

Elaine's time results were 100 percent accurate in comparison to the teacher's results. No unusual events seem to have had an impact upon N.A.'s behavior. N.A. enjoys something to look forward to when completing his work.

Discussion

To compose the intervention process, Myles (1992), stated that in order to have success upon the selection of

reinforcers, careful survey's need to be established and given to students in order to find out what their interests are. Likewise, the teacher observed N.A. involved in many different settings. For example, N.A. was tickled to see if that would be an appropriate sensory reinforcer. Meanwhile, N.A. did not like the reinforcer. Another time, N.A. was socially interacting with the teacher while engaging in building a tower with blocks. N.A. stated that he loved building a tower with the teacher. Careful consideration upon which type of reinforcement should be used took place. Upon observing, it became clearly evident to the teacher which reinforcer would seem to work best with N.A.

During the intervention, N.A. responded to visual prompts using oral language to complete all tasks. According to Segal (1990), kindergarten students enjoy arts, crafts, and dramatic play which enables them to become part of the group. Incorporating visual prompts for N.A. enabled him to understand his task, dramatically complete each task shown, and upon completing tasks included him to become part of the group. Meanwhile, he was able to work with the other students to devise a morning story. This enhanced N.A.'s ability to become more social with the other children rather than sitting on his chair in isolation from his classmates.

Another strategy used to help N.A. become more compliant was positive reinforcement. According to McDaniel (1987), "Teachers tend to assume good behavior, accept it as a commonplace, and ignore it to communicate the normal

expectation for good behavior. In addition, teachers learn to intervene quickly to squelch misbehavior" (p.36). Likewise, before the intervention was implemented, N.A. received attention when he was not compliant with the daily tasks in the classroom. For example, the teacher in the room would walk over to N.A. and speak to him in a loud firm voice every time he did not conform to the rules. However, significant successful results showed that when N.A. was given positive verbal and non-verbal reinforcement, he became more willing to complete his tasks. Also, the social reinforcer (playing an activity with the teacher) was used when all tasks were completed within a timely manner, which motivated N.A. to want to produce appropriate results. N.A. was able to make the correlation that when he produced successful results he was rewarded. N.A. liked to be rewarded; therefore, he remained compliant throughout the intervention package. In addition, through the use of good modeling, effective verbal and non-verbal reinforcement, along with establishing a social motivational reinforcer, enabled N.A. to become compliant not only within the daily morning activities but throughout the whole day of completing tasks. In order for students to respond to a teachers wishes, they must have respect for the teacher (Commanday, 1994). N.A. had respect for the teacher because he was positively reinforced for appropriate behavior and therefore remained compliant throughout the daily schedule of events.

A behavioral intervention reported by Stanley (1989), noted that thirty six percent of school psychologists in the state of Louisiana prefer reinforcing appropriate behaviors or academic success. The most popular intervention used was individual counseling. Even though the reinforcement of appropriate behaviors was not popular among the psychologists because some feel that teachers are bribing the students to complete work, something that works for one child may not work for another. N.A. was not compliant in the classroom and prior individual counseling existed with a social worker existed with no consistent success. Therefore, since N.A. seemed to pay attention and smile as the teacher praised him for good behavior, it became evident that positive reinforcement was probably not frequently used in any prior intervention. Hence, positive reinforcement made N.A. smile, happy and remain compliant.

Overall, positive verbal, non-verbal, and social reinforcers worked best with N.A. Likewise, implementing art into the intervention enabled N.A. to process what he needed to perform. Articles and books help guide researchers to interventions and strategies which may work. However, it is important for a teacher to find out what the student's individual need is and base the particular intervention strategy to meet the in particular need. Based upon the findings, it is important for a teacher to take time to find out what the students interests are and provide self-esteem in the classroom by rewarding positive behavior.

In conclusion, the intervention applied worked with N.A. with much success. The only recommendation for change would be the opportunity to conduct a longer fading phase and decrease the visual prompts used. This would enable N.A. to independently complete all tasks on his own without any cues.

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CODES

● = #of minutes taken to complete all 8 tasks.

○ = _____

■ = _____

□ = _____

Student _____ School _____

Room _____ Teacher _____